Permission to Take Part in a Human Research Study

Title of Study: A Pilot Trial of Thymalfasin (Ta1) to Prevent COVID-19 Infection in Elderly Renal Dialysis Patients

Principal Investigator: William B. Ershler, MD

Department: Benign Hematology

Phone Number: 571-472-1069

Email Address: William.ershler@inova.org

Study Contact Name: *<insert name of contact>*

Study Contact Telephone Number: *<insert phone number and 24-hour contact number>*

Study Contact Email: *<insert Email address>*

Sponsor: William B. Ershler, MD

A person who takes part in a research study is called a research or study subject. In this consent form "you" always refers to the research subject.

Key Information about This Research Study

You are asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this research is to determine if (ZADAXIN® trade name; thymalfasin generic; Ta1 for short) has any benefit in prevention of infection by SARS-CoV2 (the virus which causes COVID-19). Ta1 has been shown to stimulate the immune system to fight infections in persons in which the immune system is compromised, such as the elderly, or persons with certain diseases.

The purpose of this research study is to see if Ta1is useful against COVID-19 at dose levels thought to be acceptable in earlier studies. The researchers want to find out what effects (good and bad) Ta1 has on you and your condition.

Ta1 is already approved for sale in 37 countries (although not in the United States) for certain uses, but not for the prevention of COVID-19. For example, in China, the drug is approved for treatment of hepatitis B and to be used with vaccines; in Italy it has been approved for use with vaccines; but has not yet been approved for prevention of COVID-19. In the United States, the drug is called "experimental." This means that the drug has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for sale in the United States and will not be approved until tests show that the drug will not harm you and has good results.

You are asked to be in this study because you are at higher risk for COVID-19 due to age and requiring hemodialysis (a medical condition that may lead to a less-strong immune system and ability to fight off infection).

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Your participation in this research will involve extra procedures at some of your regular dialysis visits and will last about 6 months. We expect about 240 people at the Inova Health System will participate in this research. If you are an employee of the Inova Health System, your decision not to participate or to withdraw from the study will not affect your employment at the Inova Health System.

You will receive 1 of 2 treatments. The 2 treatments are the following: a dose of Ta1 twice a week after dialysis, or no treatment after dialysis. Ta1 will be given by a 1 mL (about 1/5 tsp) subcutaneous injection. You will have an equal chance of receiving either of the 2 treatments.

The study medication will be given as soon as reasonably practicable after you are enrolled in the study and you will continue to receive the study medication twice a week (after your dialysis) for 8 weeks.

As part of the study, nasopharyngeal swabs and blood samples will be collected for laboratory testing several times (at the beginning; every other week for eight weeks; then once a month for 4 months). Blood sampling will be done by putting a sterile needle into a vein and drawing about 4 tsps of blood from your vein. When you have your blood drawn you may feel some minor discomfort. Possible side effects include pain, redness, bruising, or bleeding at the site of the needle puncture. Some people feel lightheaded or faint when their blood is drawn. On rare occasions, an infection may occur at the needle stick site.

Almost all research studies involve some risk. These risks are described in detail later in this document.

Here are some reasons you may want to participate in this research: taking Ta1 may prevent your being infected by the SARS-CoV2 virus, or to decrease the severity of the disease. If you are chosen to be in the group not treated with Ta1, you will be contributing to knowledge about whether Ta1 can be useful against infection with the SARS-CoV2 virus and the COVID-19 disease.

Here are some reasons you may not want to participate in this research: you will have to receive a small injection twice a week for 8 weeks; you will undergo extra nasal swabs and blood sampling; you may be chosen to receive no treatment and yet still must have your nasal swabs and blood sampled. There have been many patients treated with Ta1 and some side effects have been reported. For the most part these are the result of irritation at the site of injection. However in other clinical trials other side effects have been rarely observed and these are mentioned in the paragraphs below.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study if you do not want to and you can leave the study at any time. You will not lose any services, benefits, or rights you would normally have if you choose not to participate or if you leave the study early.

There are currently no alternative prevention treatments available for prevention of infection by SARS-CoV2.

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The remainder of this form contains a more complete description of this study. Please read this description carefully. You can ask any questions you need to help decide whether or not to join this study.

What if I have Questions?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or think the research has hurt you, talk to the research team at ***[Insert contact information for the research team.]***

This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board ("IRB"). The Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) provides administrative support to the Inova Health System's IRBs.

Please call the HRPO at 1-888-534-6682 if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research subject.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

How is being in this study different from my regular health care?

Older persons on hemodialysis usually have a decreased ability to fight infection with viruses. If you take part in this study, you may be chosen to be treated with Ta1, which may help decrease your chance of becoming infected, or your disease may be less severe.

If you take part in this study, the main difference between your regular care and the study will be the additional treatment with Ta1 (if you are assigned to that treatment group), and additional sampling of nasal swabs and blood draws.

This study is not part of your health care.

How is this research funded?

This research is being funded by SciClone Pharmaceuticals International Limited (SPIL). SPIL will provide payment of all clinic and professional fees, diagnostic and laboratory tests that are a direct result of your participation in this study. Standard treatment and regular medical care not related to this study

will be your responsibility. SPIL will provide each subject with a stipend to cover any expenses, such as driving to the dialysis site and time away from work.

SPIL is also called the funder. Funders may change or be added.

What happens if I say yes, I want to be in this research?

If you qualify to enter this study, the treatment you get will be chosen by chance, like flipping a coin. Neither you, nor the study doctor will choose what study treatment you get. You will have an equal chance of being given either treatment. The 2 treatments are the following: a dose of Ta1 twice a week after dialysis, or no treatment after dialysis. Ta1 will be given by a 1 mL (about 1/5 tsp) subcutaneous injection.

The study medication will be given as soon as reasonably practicable after you are enrolled in the study and you will continue to receive the study medication twice a week for 8 weeks.

Clinical assessments will be conducted and blood will be drawn at the beginning of the study and a further eight times (every other week for eight weeks, then once a month for 4 months).

Nasopharyngeal swabs will be administered before the study (to determine if you are already infected with the virus that causes COVID-19), and if you do enter the study, they will also be taken any time(s) that you exhibit signs of infection with SARS-CoV2 (signs include cough, fever, sore throat, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms, malaise, headache, muscle pain, and loss of taste or smell).

What happens if I want to leave the study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or you may leave the study at any time. Your decision will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide to leave the research, contact the study team so the investigator can work with you to create a safe plan for your withdrawal.

If you stop being in the research, data and specimens that have already been collected will not be removed from the study database. Even if you stop being in the research study, you will be asked whether the study doctor can collect data from your routine medical care. If you agree that the study doctor can collect data from routine medical care after you stop being in the research study, this data will be handled the same as research data.

Can I be removed from the research without my OK?

The researchers may take you out of the study, even if you want to continue, if:

- You become infected with COVID-19.
- The study doctor's judgment that any condition or circumstance may jeopardize your welfare or the integrity of the study.
- Your failure to follow the instructions of the study doctors.
- If the study is stopped by SPIL or study doctors before you complete the study.
- If it is found that you do not meet the study requirements.
- If you have any side effects of concern to the study doctor.
- You do not consent to changes made in the study plan.
- Your health changes and staying on the study is no longer in your best interest;
- You do not follow the study rules or you no longer meet the requirements to be in the study; or
- The study is stopped by the funder, sponsor or researchers.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

There are risks to participating in this research. The study doctor and study team will monitor you to see if you are experiencing any harm related to your participation. Inform the study team as soon as possible if you experience pain or discomfort. As with any treatment, it is possible that Ta1 could cause reactions or discomfort.

There have been over 80 studies of Ta1 treatment, in the United States, China, Italy, and other countries, and commercial sales for over 350,000 people. There have been very few side effects reported. There have been complaints of injection-site pain (such as burning and itching) which was mild and lasted for less than 30 minutes, as well as fever, nausea, and flu-like symptoms. The majority of these experiences were mild to moderate in severity.

In a study of persons with liver disease, abnormal kidney function was seen in 3 persons, and abdominal pain, anemia, fever, hernia, and inflammation of the pancreas was seen in 2; in a study of persons with hepatitis C, one person reported a rash and 2 developed abdominal swelling; several persons with liver cancer reported nipple pain. Other side effects reported have been considered to be likely due to the underlying disease or other drugs being taken at the same time. In patients with hepatitis C taking interferon, one person who already had a history of cognitive dysfunction attempted suicide, and 2 subjects had change in their thyroid hormone production. A baby with a congenital birth defect was born to a subject with hepatitis B who was taking Ta1 along with several other drugs.

In addition to these risks, this research may hurt you in ways that are unknown. These may be a minor inconvenience or may be so severe as to cause death.

Allergic reaction: As with any drug, it is possible that you could experience an allergic reaction to Ta1. Such allergic reactions include: itching, skin rash, sudden drop in blood pressure, loss of consciousness and/or associated with seizures, including the possibility of death.

Blood draw risks: Drawing blood may cause temporary pain from the needle stick, bruising or swelling at the site, and rarely, infection or fainting.

What if new information becomes available?

We will tell you about any new information developed during your participation in this research if the information could relate to your willingness to continue to participate in this study.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

Being in this study may prevent your being infected by the SARS-CoV2 virus, or to decrease the severity of the disease. The study treatment may work better than the standard of care for your condition, but we cannot promise this will happen. The study treatment might not work at all, or it might have bad side effects. Even if the study does not help you directly, your participation in this study may help other people in the future by helping us learn more about whether Ta1 treatment can reduce the chance of infection with SARS-CoV2, or how severe the disease COVID-19 is.

This study is not a substitute for your regular medical care. You should continue to see your regular medical providers.

Will being in this study cost me anything?

SPIL will provide the study drug free of charge during this study. Tests and procedures that are done only for the study will not be billed to you or your insurance company.

There will be no cost to you for the blood and nasal swab tests that are done for research purposes only and are not part of your regular care.

You will have to pay for basic expenses like any childcare, food, parking, or transportation related to study activities, but will be given a stipend to help with these costs.

If you need treatment for side effects while you are on the study, you or your insurance will need to pay for this treatment.

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Will I be paid or receive anything for being in this study?

We will pay you $50 per month for the months that you are participating in this study, up to 6 months. Payment will be provided in the form of ***[a gift card, cash, check, etc.]***. If you choose to leave or you are taken off the study before the end of the study, you will keep the payments to date.

You may be asked for your social security number for payment purposes. It will not be used for any other purpose without your permission.

What happens if I am injured or get sick because of this study?

Although risks are unlikely, if injury should occur, treatment will in most cases be available. The clinical trial insurance held by the funder will pay your costs for reasonable and necessary care if you are hurt by the study drug or by the study drug dosing that is done to you only because you are part of this study. No additional funds will be available. Funds to compensate for pain, expenses, lost wages and other damages caused by injury are not available. This policy does not prevent you from trying to obtain compensation through the legal system.

What happens to the information collected for the research?

We will do our best to limit the use or disclosure of your personal information, including information from this research study and from your medical records, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete confidentiality. Some organizations may be required to inspect and copy your information including the IRB and other Inova Health System representatives responsible for the management or oversight of this study.

We have strict rules to protect your personal information and protected health information (PHI). We will limit who has access to your name, address, phone number, and other information that can identify you.

The study doctor and research team may publish the results of this research. However, they will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

You have an Inova Health System medical record. We use an electronic medical record system known as Epic, which improves access to information important to your medical care. Epic will show that you are in a research study and a copy of this signed consent form will be included. To provide as complete a record as possible, some or all of your study-related research information may also be placed in Epic. This specifically includes investigational drugs, devices, biologics, or anything else that may, separately or together with other substances or activities, interfere with your clinical treatment or place you at greater risk of harm. Other information from the research study may be included as well. Including this

information in the electronic medical record system is intended only to give information to caregivers providing treatment for you while you are on this study.

This information will be available to Inova Health System doctors, nurses and other authorized staff who may not be part of the research team but who are involved in providing you medical care, or who are otherwise allowed to access your information. The confidentiality of the results and other documents in Epic will be governed by laws, such as HIPAA, that concern medical records. We suggest that you tell any non-Inova Health System doctors that you are in a research study and that more information may be made available to them at your request. The research team may use your information to notify you of appointments, send you appointment reminders, or schedule additional appointments.

The funder, sponsor, monitors, auditors, the IRB, the Food and Drug Administration will be granted direct access to your medical records to conduct and oversee the research. By signing this document you are authorizing this access.

A description of this clinical trial will be available on http://www.ClinicalTrials.gov, as required by U.S. Law. This website will not include information that can identify you. At most, the website will include a summary of the results. You can search this web site at any time.

Will I receive any results from this research?

Most tests done on samples in research studies are only for research and have no clear meaning for health care. If the research, with your identifiable information or samples, gives results that do have meaning for your health, the researchers will contact you to let you know what they have found. If the researchers return genetic test results to you, it may be because they think you could have a health risk and want to recommend that the test should be re-done by a certified clinical laboratory to check the results. If this happens, then you may want to get a second test from a certified clinical laboratory, consult your own doctor, or get professional genetic counseling. You will likely have to pay for those additional services yourself.

Will information or leftover specimens be used for other research?

Information collected about you and biospecimens collected from you will be used for this research and may also be used for other research studies here at the Inova Health System. We may also share the information and specimens with other institutions for research. Before using the information and specimens for other research, the study team will remove information that identifies you so the individuals performing the research will not know who the information and specimens came from. We will not ask for additional consent from you to use your information and specimens for the additional research.

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PARTICIPANT'S STATEMENT/SIGNATURE

- *I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me.*
- *I have been given the chance to ask questions, and my questions have been answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to call.*
- *I agree to be in the research study described above.*
- *I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.*

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

_____

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent